

Policy area	Student Support
Standards	Outcome Standards for RTOs 2025, Standard 2.8.
Responsibility	CEO Trainers and Assessors, Training Manager

1. Purpose

The Appeals Handling Policy ensures that students have a fair opportunity to challenge decisions made by Heaton Institute of Technology.

The policy aims to ensure:

- Students know how to appeal decisions.
- Appeals are handled fairly and impartially.
- Appeals are managed within reasonable timeframes.
- Students can access an independent review if necessary.
- Outcomes are documented and communicated.
- Appeal outcomes are used to improve services and systems.

The policy supports:

- Natural justice.
- Procedural fairness.
- Confidentiality.
- Continuous improvement.

2. What is an Appeal?

An **appeal** is a written request from a student asking the Institute to reconsider a decision that negatively affects them.

Appeals must:

- Be submitted in writing.
- Clearly explain the decision being disputed.
- Be lodged within 28 calendar days of being notified of the decision.

Examples of decisions that may be appealed

Students may appeal decisions relating to:

Assessment outcomes

- Competency results.
- Reassessment decisions.

Administrative decisions

- Enrolment issues.
- Fees or charges.
- Changes affecting the student.

Service delivery decisions

- Changes to course delivery.
- Use of third-party providers.
- Transition arrangements when qualifications are superseded.
- Changes to terms agreed at enrolment.

Any decision that affects a student may potentially be appealed.

3. Principles of Fairness

Appeals are handled by:

- A person who was not involved in the original decision.
- An unbiased person.
- Individuals who maintain confidentiality.

Students have the right to:

- Present their case free of charge.
- Provide supporting information.
- Be heard before decisions are made.
- Receive fair treatment.
- Bring a support person to meetings.
- Receive written outcomes.

Privacy and confidentiality

Information relating to appeals:

- Is treated sensitively.
- Is kept confidential.
- Is only accessible to people directly involved in the process.

4. How Students Can Lodge and Appeal

Step 1 – Try to resolve the issue informally

Students are encouraged to first discuss concerns with the staff member involved.

Many issues can be resolved through:

- Communication.
- Clarification.
- Consultation.

Step 2 – Submit a formal appeal

If the issue cannot be resolved, students may contact:

- Training Manager.
- Office Manager.
- CEO.

The appeal should then be completed using the:

Request for an Appeal of a Decision Form

Appeals may be submitted:

- By email.
- By post.
- In hard copy.

Contact details are available in the Student Handbook.

5. Timeframes for Appeals

Appeal submission period

Students must lodge an appeal within:

28 calendar days of receiving the original decision.

Acknowledgement

The Institute will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within:

24 hours

The acknowledgement advises:

- That the appeal has been received.
- Student rights and obligations.
- The expected process.

Response timeframe

A written response should normally be provided within:

14 days

Final outcome

Appeals should be fully resolved within:

30 calendar days

Delays

If more than 30 days are required, the CEO must:

- Inform the student in writing.
- Explain the reasons for the delay.

Progress updates

Students receive regular updates at least every:

Two weeks

until the appeal is finalised.

6. Internal Review and Independent Review

Internal Review

The CEO reviews the appeal and determines the appropriate action.

Administrative appeals

May require:

- Investigation.
- Consultation.
- Collection of additional information.

Assessment appeals

Students may be offered:

- Additional training.
- Reassessment opportunities.

Students remain enrolled during the appeals process.

Independent Third-Party Review

If the student is dissatisfied with the Institute's decision, they may request an independent review.

The independent reviewer:

- Must be unbiased.
- Is external to the Institute.
- Provides recommendations within 14 days.

7. Outgoings and External Agencies

When an appeal is upheld

The Institute will implement corrective action immediately.

For assessment appeals this may include:

- Additional training.
- Reassessment.

Students are always entitled to:

- Access relevant information.
- Be heard.
- Respond to findings.

If the student remains dissatisfied

They may approach external bodies such as:

Consumer issues

Office of Fair Trading

Training and assessment issues

- National Training Complaints Hotline
- Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)

Privacy matters

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC)

The Institute will:

- Cooperate fully with external agencies.
- Provide records where required.
- Support the investigation process.

8. Records and Continuous Improvement

Record Keeping

Appeal records may include:

- Appeal forms.
- Emails.
- Correspondence.
- Decisions and outcomes.
- Continuous improvement actions.
- Entries in the Student Management System.

Security of records

Records are:

- Stored electronically.
- Protected from unauthorised access.
- Kept confidential.
- Backed up securely.

Retention period

Appeal records are retained for:

Minimum five years

Destruction of records

Only the CEO may authorise destruction of records after the retention period.

Paper records are securely shredded before disposal.

Continuous Improvement

Appeals provide valuable feedback and may identify:

- Weaknesses in systems.
- Administrative issues.
- Assessment concerns.
- Opportunities to improve student services.

Improvement actions are recorded and considered during management meetings.

9. Summary of the Appeals Process

Step	Action
1	Student receives a decision
2	Student attempts informal resolution
3	Appeal form submitted within 28 days
4	Appeal acknowledged within 24 hours
5	Appeal recorded in register
6	CEO reviews the appeal
7	Investigation or reassessment occurs
8	Student receives regular updates
9	Written outcome provided within 30 days
10	Outcome implemented
11	Independent review available if required
12	Opportunities for continuous improvement recorded

10. Reference(s)

Outcome Standards for RTOs 2025, Standard 2.7. Effective appeal processes are available where decisions of the RTO or a third party adversely impact a VET student.

The RTO demonstrates:

- (a) VET students are informed about avenues for appeal
- (b) an appeals management system that:
 - (i) ensures students are afforded procedural fairness
 - (ii) identifies reasonable timeframes for actioning appeals
 - (iii) provides avenues for review by an independent party, if requested by the student (at no or low cost to them)
- (c) appeal outcomes are documented and communicated to the student
- (d) the outcomes of appeals are used to inform continuous improvement.